

Office of Educational Assessment and Accountability
English Language Proficiency Assessment (ELPA)
Spring 2008

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers (FAQ)

1. **Who may be an ELPA proctor? We would like to select staff members who will be participating in training.**

An Assessment Proctor may be a teacher's aide, paraprofessional, or other paid district or school staff member. If volunteers must be used, they should be trained with appropriate testing procedures, just like any other proctor. Family members of students in the assessment group must not be used as proctors. Refer to Appendix B in the ELPA Directions for Administration for proctor's duties. Proctors may administer any section(s) of the ELPA, but proctors must be working under the direct supervision of an Assessment Administrator, who must be a staff member with Michigan educational certification in any field. It is ultimately the responsibility of the Assessment Administrator to ensure that all procedures and directions are followed properly.

2. **Do sections of the ELPA need to be completed in one day, or could they be continued onto the next day?**

Each section or domain of the ELPA needs to be completed in one continuous session unless it has been divided into two parts, such as Writing, which is divided into Writing Conventions and Writing.

3. **Do ELPA sections need to be given in any particular order?**

No, they can be given in any order.

4. **Will an ELPA score replace a MEAP score? If our ELLs successfully take the MEAP, do they also have to take the ELPA?**

The ELPA score can only be used in place of the English Language Arts (ELA) portion of the MEAP, and only if the student qualifies as "recently arrived." Recently-arrived students are those students who have attended U.S. public schools for 12 months or less at the time of the beginning MEAP assessment window. These students will still need to take the MEAP mathematics, science, or social studies assessments, using accommodations as necessary for their status.

ELLs are to participate in both assessment systems. The MEAP and ELPA are considered to be separate—with different assessment requirements—as defined by the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation. The MEAP is the assessment system that the State of Michigan uses to measure student progress with Michigan content standards in mathematics, ELA, science, and social studies. The ELPA is the assessment system that the State of Michigan uses to measure student progress in English language acquisition; it is based on Michigan's English language proficiency (ELP) standards.

In past years, schools and districts chose from different commercially-available ELP assessments to measure and report student progress in the acquisition of the English

language. These scores were used for Title III reporting. Today, the results from the ELPA are used for this purpose.

5. **How about the MME? Are students exempt under the same rules? If so, which portions do they not take?**

Recently-arrived ELL students must also take the MME. The parts of the MME that contribute to an MME English Language Arts score are not separable from the rest of the test. For that reason, recently-arrived ELL students will take all portions of the MME. Their resultant ELA results will not show a final score, but for purposes of calculating participation for AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress), they will be recorded as having taken the assessment.

6. **We have only a few ELLs in our district. May the ELPA be given in a one-on-one setting?**

Yes.

7. **Will students who have exited ELL programs and have been designated as Formerly Limited English Proficient (FLEP) be tested with the ELPA?**

Assessment of FLEP students is optional for schools and districts. We encourage the use of the ELPA to assist schools in monitoring their progress. If you choose to assess FLEP students, please order ELPA materials for these students, and mark the appropriate bubble on the answer document to indicate their FLEP status.

If you have exited students from ELL programs before the beginning of the ELPA window during this same school year (2007-2008), these students should still take the ELPA. After the Spring 2008 ELPA, they will not appear in the automatic pre-identification records for later ELPA cycles.

8. **We don't have any ELL programs. Do we need to give the ELPA?**

All ELLs who are eligible to receive ELL services need to be assessed, regardless of whether they are actually receiving services. If you have students who have been identified as ELLs from the Home Language Survey, they must be assessed for their English language proficiency.

9. **Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) address MEAP and MI-Access, but not the ELPA. If a student takes MI-Access, and this student is an ELL, is this student assessed with the ELPA?**

All students who are eligible for services need to be assessed, including Students with Disabilities (SWDs). We recommend that schools and districts order the appropriate grade level materials for the ELPA. Once received, please review the test materials to see if they can be appropriately used for your SWDs. The ELPA section of the Assessment Accommodation Guidelines may help in this determination. If the ELPA is not appropriate according to a student's IEP, please contact OEAA at (877) 560-8378.

10. **When we give the ELPA, do we need to consider exactly what service(s) the student receives, or only that they are eligible to receive service?**

The school or district needs to consider only that the student is eligible for services, not whether the student is actually receiving LEP (ELL) services.

11. **How can we receive more information from the State about the ELPA?**

Join our e-mail list. It's called the MDE-ELLA ListServ. See question #38 for instructions on how to subscribe to this ListServ.

Also, the OEAA has made numerous updates to the public ELPA Web site at www.michigan.gov/elpa.

12. **Will MDE automatically send coordinator manuals, or do we have to request them?**

The public ELPA Web site at www.michigan.gov/elpa is a good resource. You can download a .PDF of the sections of the Directions For Administration that are relevant to coordinators.

District coordinators can also order Directions for Administration manuals using the Spectrum materials ordering site. Directions for using the Spectrum site are downloadable in .PDF format at www.michigan.gov/elpa.

13. **In regard to the Speaking portion of the ELPA, do the assessors need to be certified staff? Also, do two people need to listen and score each individual student?**

The staff that administers the speaking portion may be a staff member that qualifies as an assessment proctor as described in the updated OEAA Professional Assessment and Accountability Practices for Educators, August 2005. This is available for download at www.michigan.gov/oeaa. Proctors work closely with certified staff members who are actually in charge of the assessment administration process. It is important that all staff members involved in the assessment process receive appropriate training prior to the administration of the ELPA. See question #1 for more clarification.

14. **May parents "opt out" of testing?**

As an assessment of all eligible K-12 ELL students, the ELPA is mandated by the federal government through the NCLB law. It must be given to students who are determined to be eligible for LEP (ELL) services through the use of the Home Language Survey and according to the policies of the school district in which the student is enrolled.

15. **Are foreign exchange students eligible for the ELPA, even if they are grade 12 students?**

Yes, if they meet the criteria using the Home Language Survey.

16. **Do we assign students to the ELPA based on their grade level in school or their grade level equivalent of their English language skills? For example, what do we do with a**

9th grade student who has the English skills of a second grader?

Students are to take the ELPA that match their grade level of enrollment. If students are enrolled in grade 9, they would take the ELPA at Assessment Level V.

17. Can additional materials now be ordered on the Web site?

The Spectrum site is open to take orders for additional materials until Monday, April 21, 2008.

18. Are the Speaking rubrics still available for training?

There are five rubrics for all levels of the ELPA, which can be found in the Spring 2008 Directions for Administration Coordinator Sections, downloadable from www.michigan.gov/elpa. These are: Sentence Repeat, Short Conversation, Storytelling, Story Retell, and Guided Discussion. Note that each of these has different maximum scores.

In addition, your District ELPA Coordinator was sent a special Speaking Item Scoring Training DVD for use with assessment administrators and proctors. If your district did not receive this DVD, please contact Phil Chase at chasep@michigan.gov to request a copy.

19. Is the teleconference from February 5, 2008, still available to review?

Yes, it is available at www.mistreamnet.com.

20. Will the ELPA replace the Woodcock-Muñoz test?

The ELPA is now used as the official State of Michigan assessment for Title III annual reporting purposes. The Woodcock-Muñoz and other English language proficiency assessments may continue to be used by schools and districts for diagnostic purposes only.

21. If a student scores higher on the ELPA than on the Woodcock-Muñoz test, will this cause him or her to be ineligible for ELL services?

No. Placement and exit decisions for Title III programs are based on a number of factors, only one of which is a score on an English language proficiency assessment. The expert opinions of educators and other assessments may also be used to make a determination.

22. Should we test ELLs and bilingual education students who are also in special education services?

Yes. All students who are eligible for Title III services—whether or not they are currently receiving those services—need to be assessed. This includes students with disabilities and Section 504 students.

23. On the Sentence Repeat section of the Speaking test, may a proctor repeat a prompt for a student if he or she asks to hear it again?

The Directions for Administration specifies what is read aloud to the student. The prompt is read only once. Note that a sample is provided for each type of prompt in the ELPA. While the sample is given, the staff member giving the assessment may check for understanding and may remind the students that the prompt will be only read one time.

24. Last year's ELPA reports also had "Comprehension." The ELPA features four sections: Listening, Reading, Writing, and Speaking. When are the students assessed for their comprehension?

Items in the Listening and Reading sections that match those ELP standards that have been identified as contributing to Comprehension will be used to report this score.

25. Once a student tests as "Proficient," must they take the ELPA again the next year?

At this time, testing of the student is based on a student's eligibility for Limited English Proficiency services. Eligibility is based on locally-determined factors which may include a number of criteria in addition to a "Proficient" score on an English language proficiency assessment. Each district must set their own policy for using the ELPA score as part of several factors that determine a student's exit or entrance into ELL services or programs. See #22 for more information.

26. Do we read the question answer choice to the students on the Listening section?

Yes. The test questions (item stems) and answer choices may be read aloud to all students taking the Listening section of the ELPA. The Listening CDs and tapes automatically include the reading of all textual answer choices.

27. Are extra blank documents automatically sent as part of our orders?

An automatic overage of 10% was automatically sent along to all schools. If you discover, upon receipt all materials, including extra blank documents, that you still need additional materials, please contact your district ELPA coordinator who can log into the Spectrum site to place these additional orders. A district can order materials to go just to the district offices by selecting its own name from the drop-down list of schools at the time of ordering.

28. Can ISDs get extra materials for distribution to buildings if needed?

No. For this spring 2008 cycle, additional materials orders are sent only to districts for use in schools. This will facilitate the accounting for the return of all secure ELPA materials at the close of testing. Each secure item is scanned upon return.

Many ISDs and consortia have ELL coordinators who are willing to help in the process of ensuring that all of Michigan's English language learners are recognized and assessed in compliance with the law. For now, we are relying on ISD and consortia ELL coordinators to help coordinate information for districts, answer questions where possible, and coordinate training where necessary.

29. **If we see that a pre-printed label is incorrect, can we make a new label?**

You can make any demographic information changes on the OEAA secure site for this spring's assessment cycle. As you do this, make sure that the student's grade level and all other demographic information are correct. Then you can print a new label and affix it carefully on top of the existing label on the student's test booklet or answer document so the incorrect label is not visible.

30. **What if we have an ELL student who is also in special education? Do we indicate "Special Ed" on the ELPA?**

We already have that information from the SRSD data. If the student is given testing accommodations, however, please indicate these on the demographic form.

31. **Should we administer the ELPA Initial Screening to students who enroll after the Spring 2008 window?**

Yes. As soon as your district has closed its testing cycle (based on the ELPA Cycle it registered for), please continue to use the current ELPA Initial Screening. You can order new ELPA Initial Screening materials at any time by using the order form found on www.michigan.gov/elpa.

32. **Will a district receive multiple forms within the same assessment level?**

We have worked with our administration contractor to provide one form to smaller districts; multiple forms are needed for districts with large numbers of students.

33. **On the Speaking Item Training DVD, we noticed that the administrator closed the book before the student retold the story. Is this done at all grade levels?**

The instruction that appears in the Directions for Administration is that the proctor turns over the book so that the student cannot simply read back the story on the page. (On the video, the book was closed and placed face-up because the sample booklets that were generated for the taping of the students had an item on the back, possibly distracting students.) However, proctors of the ELPA will turn over books for students of all levels.

34. **If a student was registered in the fall through the ELPA Initial Screening, will they need a barcode label?**

No. If this student scored at the Proficient level or lower this student would have been added to the pre-identified list and thus will receive a test booklet or answer document with a pre-printed, pre-applied label.

35. **There seem to be a number of mistakes in the ELPA Directions for Administration. For example, every few questions, the directions don't seem to match what the students have in their test booklets. What do I do?**

Check the tab label for the form number in the Directions for Administration that you are reading. There is more than one form, or version of the test, in each assessment level. The form number on the student test booklet should match the blue tab you see on the sides of the pages in the Directions for Administration. If you read from the wrong form, it will not match what your students see for some of the questions. Also, as you administer the test, ensure that the students are all on the same page numbers you are referring to as you read from the directions.

36. **How did my school receive a pre-identified (pre-printed) ELPA test for some students and not for others?**

A student would have received a pre-identified test if he or she took the ELPA in the spring of 2007 and received a score of less than "Proficient," took the ELPA Initial Screening in the fall of 2007 and received a score of "Proficient" or lower, and/or was not exited from LEP services in the Single Record Student Database (SRSD) count submitted by the district in September of 2007. Other students might have been determined by the district to be eligible for ELL services (such as students who scored "Proficient" but were eligible in ELL services according to the district's pre-determined criteria). These other students would need to use tests with labels printed at the school.

37. **I heard about the state's ListServ for ELL information. How can I subscribe?**

Many of our ELL paraprofessionals, teachers, department leaders, and program administrators have joined our email list called the MDE-ELLA ListServ. They receive announcements via email related to the ELPA and other issues related to assessing ELLs. Membership is free. To subscribe send an e-mail message to listserv@listserv.michigan.gov with the words "SUB mde-ella" in the Subject line and the words "SUBSCRIBE mde-ella" in the message text. You will receive an automatic confirmation, and then you'll begin to receive periodic e-mails.

38. **Are there opportunities for ESL or Bilingual Ed. teachers to get involved in the development of the ELPA?**

Yes. We welcome the active participation of Michigan's field of ELL educators. Interested professionals and para-professionals who want to be considered for participation on ELPA committees should download, fill out, and fax in the Application Form for Educator Committee Membership, available on www.michigan.gov/elpa. We will notify anyone who is selected about upcoming events.

39. **We need Level I ELPA Initial Screening materials in time for Kindergarten Round-Up. Is this possible?**

Yes. We have designed a new ELPA Initial Screening testing cycle, called the Sunshine Cycle, specifically for the ordering of Level I materials and for the entry of Level I scores into the OEAA Secure Site. (These Level I materials are the same as for the Leaf and Snowflake Cycles of the ELPA Initial Screening, so check how many you have on hand before you order.)

Download a Sunshine Cycle Order Form at www.michigan.gov/elpa and fax it in. Then, register your incoming Kindergarten students as you would any other student who took the ELPA Initial Screening. These students do not take the Reading and Writing sections of the ELPA Initial Screening. You can then print a report for them as you would for any other student.

The OEAA Secure Site is found at www.michigan.gov/oeaa-secure.

40. When ordering Spring 2008 ELPA materials on the Spectrum site, do I need to know the form number?

No. This has been pre-determined for your district, and you will receive materials that match the form number(s) from your original order.